

# THE TOWER

JUNE 2012

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*Celebrating 125 Years in Service to the LORD  
1887 - 2012*

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## A NOTE FROM THE MINISTER

### “The Spiritual Side of *Desperate Housewives*”



On the evening of May 13, television viewers said goodbye to *Desperate Housewives*. One of my good friends recommended to Linda that she watch this dark comedy eight years ago. The first two episodes had already gone by, but on the following Sunday evening at 9:00pm, I took my usual spot on the sofa next to her with the newspaper in my hands, as I would normally do when Linda watched TV. Hearing the woman narrator's short synopsis of what would be the theme of that particular episode, I peeked over the newspaper to see what this new show was about. Then the opening credits with accompanying music came on the screen with a background of artwork portraying various women's roles in society through the ages culminating with apples falling into the hands of four women who were the stars of the show. At that point, my interest was aroused and I decided to put the newspaper down and watch the program. Sixty minutes later, both Linda and I were hooked.

At first we weren't sure why we were attracted to the series. But something kept getting us back each Sunday evening in front of our console television (that's right, we've still resisted purchasing one of those flat screen televisions) to watch the adventures of the four neighbors (Susan, Lynette, Bree, and Gaby) on Wisteria Lane as they bounced from one crisis to another.

The more we watched, however, the more I came to believe that this show was much more than just the antics of four self-indulgent housewives living in their chic suburban neighborhood. There was a subtle spiritual side to their quirky relationships as they struggled to “love thy neighbor as thyself.”

From the opening sequence of the first episode (which we had to catch in reruns) when the ostensibly impeccable housewife, Mary Alice Young, puts a gun to her head and pulls the trigger, leaving her four neighbors wondering why they didn't know something was wrong, to Susan's rivalry with Edie over Mike's affection, to Lynette's battle with cancer, to Bree's alcoholism, to Gaby's rapist stepfather's return, it is clear that *Desperate Housewives* has been about a lot more than the escapades of four desperate women. It has also been about how much these idiosyncratic ladies care about each other, and though they have fought many times over the years, how much they really do love each other.

The last plotline revolves around Gaby's husband Carlos murdering her stepfather when he has returned to do her more harm. Susan, Lynette, and Bree all come to her aid to help cover up the crime by burying the stepfather's body in the dead of night. When the police eventually uncover the body, Bree is arrested for his murder, but refuses to implicate Carlos or her three friends. Through various twists and turns, the loyalty of the four girlfriends is pushed to its most desperate limits as "do unto others" becomes almost impossible to uphold.

Yet the conflicts that arise in the relationships of these four women develop because they're flawed persons, just as we all are. Despite their limitations, they try, in an intimate and authentic way, to be neighbors in a biblical sense to each other. Susan sums up this spiritual neighborliness in the final episode when she says, "It's funny, some people never get to know the folks next door. They share a fence and nothing else, and we've shared everything. How did we get to be so lucky?"

What we can learn from these four women of Wisteria Lane is the truth that loving one's neighbor is challenging because it demands the giving of one's whole self. It requires honestly sharing who you are with another: your time, emotions, stories, money, secrets, fears, and vulnerabilities. It means sharing Susan's horribly prepared dinners with Bree's perfectly prepared ones.

Living that way carries the hazard of hurt precisely because it asks that we be willing to share the most desperate, shameful parts of our lives in order to be truly loved and to love truly in return.

As Susan leaves her house in the ending sequence of the final episode, Mary Alice, who has been the narrator of the show for the entire eight seasons, says that the ghosts of those whose lives played out on Wisteria Lane are watching her. "They watched her as they watch everyone, always hoping the living could learn to put aside rage and sorrow, bitterness and regret. These ghosts watch, wanting people to remember that even the most desperate life is oh so wonderful."

The enduring lesson that we can learn from *Desperate Housewives* just might be the truth that, in one way or another, we are all desperate . . . but if we do our best to love our neighbor by opening and giving ourselves to them, our lives may not seem to be that desperate after all.

Blessings in Christ,  
Pastor Gary



## **THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**

. . . to **Ron Devoe and Malcolm Beauvais** for again this year organizing, preparing, and serving up a delicious Pancake Plus Sunrise Service Breakfast! Bless you, Ron and Malcolm not just for what you do but the way you do it! It was fantastic!!

. . . to our **Park Congregational Church Choir** for the beautiful Cantata they presented to their church family on Easter morning! Enhanced by members of our Youth Group and interspersed with solos, duets, and narrations by Ron Devoe (in biblical costume as Peter), and all under the direction of our Organist and Choir Director, David Rose, the Cantata powerfully, yet tenderly, communicated the wonderful message of Easter.

## **THANK YOU SO MUCH PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

. . . for your generous gift to Heifer International, where it has already been put to work toward igniting transformation in families and projects all over the world. . . . As a local volunteer I've visited projects and know how important your help is and how grateful the project participants are. Last May I was in Zimbabwe and the people there would want me to say, "Siyabonga Kukulu!" Please also know that we have a dedicated group of volunteers in central Massachusetts who are eager to assist you with future Heifer endeavors. Thanks again.

John Perkins  
Area Volunteer Coordinator, Central Massachusetts, Heifer International

## **THE UCC SAYS THANK YOU TO THE MEMBERS OF PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

. . . for your 2011 contribution for Basic Support of Our Church's Wider Mission.

Geoffrey Black  
General Minister and President, United Church of Christ  
Jim Antal  
Minister and President, Massachusetts Conference, UCC

**THANK YOU PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

. . . for your gift to our Memorial Fund in memory of The Reverend Dr. Milton H. Bartlett whose name has been entered in our book of remembrance.  
First Congregational Church, UCC, West Boylston

**THANK YOU GARY AND LINDA AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

. . . for your thoughtful notes, supportive words, and comforting prayers [in regard to the death of Betsy]. It surely helps to feel the concern and sympathy from our sister congregation, and is one more reason to celebrate your presence among us! On behalf of our whole family--Thank you!  
Rev. John Minott

**DEAR PASTOR GARY AND MEMBERS OF PARK CHURCH,**

I enjoy receiving and reading the *Tower*. Keeps me in touch with back home and what's going on in the church. Congratulations on your 125 years as a church. Park Church was my first church when I moved to Worcester. Then I transferred to Adams Square Congregational Church. No more Adams Square. There are no Congregational churches on Whidbey Island where I live. My donation for receiving the *Tower* is enclosed. Thanks for visiting my son Wayne and remembering him in your prayers. It means so much to me to know that he is remembered.  
God Bless,  
Doris Newlands

**THANK YOU TO DAVID ROSE, JENNIFER NODELMAN, AND ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE APRIL 15 CONCERT AS PART OF PARK CHURCH'S 125<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

David's recital of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" was absolutely breathtaking, Jennifer's heavenly soprano voice resonated rapturously throughout Gordon Hall, and the audience was regaled by the performance on the cello, violin, and guitar of Alex Jordan, Carolyn Jordan, Erin Cooper, and Joshua Nakama. The "Pie Jesu" rendition by Jennifer, Kristl Courtemanche, and Art Pelletier was also outstanding.

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**"Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out!"**

A minister told his congregation to read Mark 17 in preparation for next Sunday's sermon. On the following Sunday, the minister asked for a show of hands as to how many read Mark 17. Every hand went up. The minister then said, "Mark has only sixteen chapters. I will now proceed with my sermon on the sin of lying."

**THANK YOU TO CHRSTINE WILSON AND ANN LAVALLEE FOR ORGANIZING THE SCOTTISH TEA ON APRIL 28 AS PART OF PARK CHURCH'S 125<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

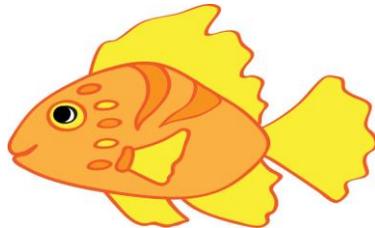
The Scottish Tea was highlighted by a brilliant performance of Mary, Queen of Scots, by Muriel Dyas which lasted about 45 minutes. Not only was her dramatization very informational, but also highly entertaining. Afterward the audience was treated to Scottish pastries, finger sandwiches, and other delicacies. Then everyone sang Scottish ditties. This occasion celebrated the Scottish Sundays that Park Church hosted for 20 years between 1976-1996, which were a very important part of our church's ministry that helped to put our congregation on the map.

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**GAME NIGHT WILL TAKE PLACE ON SATURDAY EVENING, JUNE 9, AT 7:00PM  
AT THE CHURCH IN THE LEE ROOM**

Bring your favorite board games! Bring your friends! Bring some snacks! It's lots of fun! Youth and children are also welcome! It's a great way to socialize!

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**VACATION BIBLE CAMP**  
**"OPERATION OVERBOARD"**  
June 25, 26, 27, 28, 2012

To be held together for another wonderful year by  
Park Congregational Church and Wesley United Methodist Church  
5:30 PM - 8:30 PM  
held at  
First Baptist Church, 111 Park Avenue, Worcester

Get ready to go OVERBOARD in God's love and promises

## THE CHILDREN'S TOWER

June 2012



Dear Children,

I think we have all heard the words "WWJD" or seen those letters written somewhere, even on a bumper sticker on a car! "WWJD." Well, in case you don't know what those letters stand for, I will tell you. "WWJD" stands for "What Would Jesus Do."

Now, no doubt, you're thinking this question would of course only be something about church, or Sunday School, or how we live our lives, or something about missions, or, in a nutshell, only HOLY things!! Well, guess what? Miss Linda is not talking "churchy" things! Miss Linda has a little twist to "WWJD" . . . she is asking "WWJWYTD" now that it is **SUMMER!!!** Glorious, glorious SUMMER!

School will be over in a few weeks and we will all be gathered together for Vacation Bible Camp! Hooray! Hooray! Waking up in the morning, you will have a *different feeling*.

God's wonderful creation is at its finest during these summer months! It is warm, sunny, bright, full of green trees and pretty flowers! It shimmers of blue skies and clear waters! The birds are all about mixing together with butterflies, bees, and, yes, mosquitoes! The days are long and lazy, not to be rushed! No heavy backpacks to carry to and from school. NO HOMEWORK! No getting up at 6 AM to be ready for the 7 AM school bus or even having to walk to school (oops . . . Miss Linda is having a flashback to when she was your age . . . and yes, there WERE school buses back then, but my school was less than a mile away from my home). Oh, gosh! I got so involved rambling about the beauty and glory of summer that I never told you what "WWJWYTD" meant. Have you guessed? Give it a try. Hmmmmmm . . . okay, time's up!

"WWJWYTD" means "What Would Jesus Want You To Do!" "WWJWYTD" now that summer is here? What would Jesus want you to do with this wonderful gift of summer? It is my true belief that He wants you to savor and enjoy every moment of this time, treating our wonderful world carefully and lovingly while having a fun-filled, safe summer!

Wishing you a blessed "WWJWYTD" summer . . .

*Your friend . . . Linda*



Sunday, June 10, 2012

### CHILDREN'S DAY

The day we celebrate our wonderful children . . . the future of our church!

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### Youth Sunday!



Sunday, June 17, will be **YOUTH SUNDAY** at Park Congregational Church with our Youth Group leading the morning worship service.

With the summer approaching, like all of us, our youth are looking forward to enjoying their school vacation . . . but would encourage all not to take a vacation from church! In the past, they have set a wonderful example with quite regular Sunday morning attendance during the summer months!



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